

The Big House  
Palisades, N. Y.

Rockland County

HABS No. NY-4122

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. 4  
New York State

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Wakefield Worcester, District Officer  
25 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y.

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THE BIG HOUSE  
PALISADES, WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK  
ROCKLAND

Owner:

Mrs. L. T. Hyde

Date of Erection:

1685-1703-1720-C1745-1770-1826-1898

Architect:

Unknown

Builder:

Dr. George Lockhardt

Present condition:

Good

Number of stories:

Two

Materials of construction:

Foundations - stone

Exterior walls - Brownstone (whitewash)

Interior walls - stud and plaeter

Floore - wood

Roof - wood ehingles and wood rafters

Gable ends - wood studs and clapboard

Other Exieting Records:

Bronze tablet in building entitled - "History of Big House 1685 --- 1899"; also records of mortgages and deeds in Library of Big House; map entitled "Philip Verplanck's Map of George Lockhardt patent", dated June 19, 1745, and map showing datee when various parts of house were added. These are cited in the following chronological synopeis headed "Additional Data."

Additional Data:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Record:</u>	<u>Reference:</u>
1685	Original patent for about 5 square miles, in vicinity, and including Palisades, N. Y., was granted to Dr. George Lockhardt by King James II. The original house, now the east wing, was built by Dr. Lockhardt. (Date questionable)	Orange County records, Sec. of State's office, Albany; "History of Rockland County," by Rev. D. Cole, D.D.
1703	The house and farm were transferred to William Corbett. A portion of present main block of house erected. (Date questionable)	Recordsmap, Palisades Library
1720	The house and farm were transferred to Henry Ludlow, son-in-law of John Corbett. An addition was then added to main block of house. (Date questionable).	Records map, P. L.
1729	The house was partly destroyed by fire.	Records - P. L.
1745	Rebuilt before this date by Captain John Corbett, father-in-law of Henry Ludlow. Known as "Henry Ludlow House" on Verplanck's map.	Verplanck's map, P. L.
1770	The house was sold to Thomas Lawrence and his wife, and an addition completing the main block of house was added.	Records map, P. L.
1792	Mortgage on property held by Philip Dubey, was taken over by John De Vivian (John Francis de Vitum).	Record of deed and mortgage, P. L.
1806	The house and a portion of the land (36-1/2 acres) were deeded to John Van Kleeck and Abraham Post, Jr., by Thomas Lawrence and wife.	Records of deed, P. L.
1808	Abraham Post and wife sold a half interest in the property to John Van Kleeck.	Record of deed, P. L.
1811	The house and farm were deeded to John and Mary Lawrence by John Van Kleeck.	Record of deed, P. L.
1819	Previous to this date, the house had been assigned to C. Wandoyet and Abraham Leibagh who now deeded the property back to John and Mary Lawrence, the latter, the wife of John L. Van Kleeck.	Record of deed, P. L.
1826	John Lawrence sold his interest in the house to Mary L. Van Kleeck, wife of John L. Van Kleeck. The present west wing was added, completing the house.	Record of deed, P. L.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Record:</u>	<u>Reference:</u>
1833	The house and farm, at the death of John L. Van Kleeck, was, in part, assigned to executors of the estate at the probating of will.	Record of Will, P. L.
1836	Mrs. Mary L. Van Kleeck, who was still living, deeded her share of the estate to the executors of the estate of John L. Van Kleeck.	Record of deed, P. L.
1838	The house and farm were sold to Phoebe Weeks by the executors of the estate.	Record of deed, P. L.
1840	The house and farm were sold to William B. Oddie by Phoebe Weeks.	Record of deed, P. L.
1841	The house and farm were sold to M. Van Schaik by William B. Oddie.	Record of deed, P. L.
1846	M. Van Scheik sold the house and farm back to William B. Oddie.	Record of deed, P. L.
1860	William B. Oddie deeded the house and farm to his son, John Van Schaik Oddie.	Record of deed, P. L.
1863	ry Hen/Van Schaik, guardian for John Ven Schaik Oddie, and M. Van Schaik, mortgagor, sold the house and farm to J. Von Nostrand .	Record of deed, P. L.
1869	The house and farm were sold to Rufus D. Case by John J. Von Nostrand.	Record of deed, P. L.
1870	Rufus D. Case sold the house and farm to Martha J. Peet. The mortgage was held by the U. S. Life Insurance Company.	Record of deed, P. L.
1874	The mortgagor foreclosed, and Seth B. Cole, referee, deeded the property to Frederick D. Peet who in turn deeded it to William Peet, Jr.	Record of deed, P. L.
1892	The house and farm were sold to Ashley M. Herren by William Peet, Jr.	Record of deed, P. L.
1893	The house and farm were sold to Robert B. Herren by Ashley M. Herren who in turn sold the property to William Jex.	Record of deed, P. L.
1896	The house and farm were sold to Mary L. Jex by William Jex.	Record of deed, P. L.
1897	The property was sold to William Bronk by Mary L. Jex.	Record of deed, P. L.

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<u>Date:</u>	<u>Record:</u>	<u>Reference</u>
1898	The property was sold to William Peet, Jr., son of the Wm. Peet previously mentioned, who, in turn, resold the house to Lydia G. Lawrence. The house was renovated and rebuilt by Mrs. H. E. Lawrence to serve as a library.	Record of deed, Palisades Library
1936	Previous to this date, the property was transferred to Mrs. Henry E. Lawrence who founded the present Library. The house is now owned by Mrs. L. T. Hyde, who bought the property from Mrs. Henry E. Lawrence.	Bronze tablet; "History of Big House" in P. L.

#### HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SUMMARY

One of the oldest dwellings in Rockland County, the "Big House", has a historical background dating back 250 years.

In 1685, twenty years after the Dutch were forced to relinquish control of "Nieuw Amsterdam" to the English, Dr. George Lockhardt received a patent from King James II for 3,400 acres on the west side of the Hudson opposite what is now Dobbs Ferry. This grant included what was later known as "Snedens Landing", now called Palisades, which is beautifully situated on the northern slope of Palisades Ridge.

In "Snedens Landing" Dr. George Lockhardt built what must have been a very modest home, since "the foundations of the eastern end of the present building are doubtless of that period." The "eastern end" is now the east wing.

Between 1703 and 1720 additions were made to the house.

In 1729 a fire destroyed all but the stone walls which remained standing.

Captain John Corbett rebuilt the house for his daughter and son-in-law, Henry Ludlow, who occupied the dwelling. The discolored brownstone was heavily whitewashed and the gable ends ~~and rafters~~ were completed with wood as was common in that area in the Colonial period.

Forty years later, when the house came into the possession of the Lawrence family, an addition was added to complete the main block of the house.

Jonathan Lawrence, while owner of the house, was host to many famous Revolutionary leaders during the War for Independence. "According to tradition, Washington and Lafayette, and some have said that Von Steuben once dined here." History further states "that General Washington and Count de Rochambeau crossed the Hudson from Dobbs Ferry to reconnoiter the British position from the Palisades in 1781. On their return they may have enjoyed the hospitality of the loyal home then in the dwelling."

After changing hands the house again was in the possession of a Lawrence, - namely; the wife of John Van Kleeck, who in 1826 added the present west wing.

For the next 60-odd yeers the house had many owners. The Peet and Oddie families each held poessionion for 20 years, end others held it for shorter periods until it returned to the Lawrence family in 1898.

In this year, it was decided to dedicate this historic landmark as the Palisades Library. The building was completely renovated, dormere and gables were built and the roof was raised. Later, porches were added. All these additione and changes were designed in the style current in the Nineties, and entirely out of character with the originally well proportioned building.

The building ie now used as both Library and residence. Mrs. L. T. Hyde is the owner.

\_\_\_\_\_(Author)

Milton Fisher

\_\_\_\_\_(Editor)

Thomas W. Hotchkiss

Approved:



Wakefield Worcester, District Officer

—H.W.

8/27/37